

**Rede des Bundesministers des Auswärtigen,
Dr. Guido Westerwelle MdB,
14. Vollversammlung des
World Jewish Congress
am 6. Mai 2013
in Budapest**

--- ES GILT DAS GESPROCHENE WORT ---

Dear President Lauder,
liebe Frau Knobloch,
lieber Herr Dr. Graumann,
Distinguished guests,
Dear friends,

For several hundred years, Budapest was one of the most vibrant centers of Jewish life in Europe. The Great Synagogue on Dohány Street is one of the most beautiful and impressive monuments of Jewish Heritage in Europe.

In March 1944, Adolf Eichmann set up his staff in the Hotel Majestic here in Budapest.

Within few weeks, 500.000 Hungarian Jewish children, women and men were deported and killed in Auschwitz.

The memory of this darkest chapter of German History stays with us forever. We mourn the six million sons and daughters of the Jewish people that were murdered in the Shoah.

We are profoundly grateful that today, Jewish communities are once again an integral part of our societies in Germany and in Europe. I sincerely thank the World Jewish Congress and the Central Council of Jews in Germany for their commitment to this cause.

I am very honored and grateful to be here today and address your Plenary Assembly. I thank you for the trust and the faith of the international Jewish Community in Germany.

The World Jewish Congress has always been at the forefront in protecting the memory of the Holocaust. Germany stands by your side.

We must not forget and we will not forget.

It is our responsibility to preserve the memory of the Holocaust for future generations. We owe it to the victims. We owe it to the survivors. We owe it to ourselves. Yet, our responsibility is not only about preserving the memory of the past. It is about shaping the future. We are firmly committed to protecting and nourishing Jewish life in our societies and to countering Anti-Semitism across the globe.

Anti-Semitism has no place neither in Berlin nor in Budapest nor anywhere else in Europe or in the world.

The fight against Anti-Semitism is not only about protecting Jewish citizens against such distasteful attacks as occurred last summer in Berlin against Rabbi Alter.

We have to tackle the root causes of Anti-Semitism.

We have to invest in Holocaust education and research. And we have to stand up against Anti-Semitism when it comes along in a subtle way.

Some people think: What do I have to do with this? That is not my business.

Today it might be a Jewish neighbour, tomorrow it is yourself.

This fight is about preserving our common values. It is about standing up for democracy, for individual freedom, for human rights and for human dignity.

Two weeks ago, on April 21st, tens of thousands rallied here in Budapest for the "March of the Living".

They stood together to remember the victims of the Holocaust and to protest against anti-Semitism. These pictures, to me, sent a message of hope that we will prevail.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Of course the bond between Germany and Israel derives from history. But it is much more: we belong to the same community of values. Israel is the only sustainable and functioning democracy in the Middle East. We belong to the same community of values, the community of democrats.

I was a young student when I first visited Israel. I traveled the country and went to the hills of Galilee. Standing on top of Mount Tabor and overlooking the country, I realized just how small Israel is.

And I came to understand what security means for Israel.

Almost every Israeli citizen over the years has witnessed loss in his family or among his friends. Two generations of Israeli citizens have lived through war.

Security for Israel is something that cannot be taken for granted. Germany stands by its commitment to the security of Israel.

And let me add: Israel has the legitimate right to defend itself.

We will continue to denounce any incitement against the State of Israel or its right to exist. We will stand up when Israel is threatened or its legitimacy called into question.

And we have made very clear: We cannot and will not accept an Iranian nuclear weapon.

I understand that Israeli citizens view the Iranian nuclear program as an existential threat. It is a threat for the stability of the entire region. It could spark a nuclear arms race.

And it endangers the global non-proliferation regime, a cornerstone of global security. Together with our partners we are investing tremendous efforts into the negotiations with Iran. Our aim is simple. We want to ensure that the Iranian regime forsakes nuclear weapons.

We do not underestimate the enormous difficulties. But a strong and united stance by the international community is the best way to convince Iran to meet its international obligations.

We have proven resolve in adopting ever stronger sanctions against the Iranian Regime. These sanctions are showing results.

Iran must now seriously engage to give the negotiation process a chance to succeed. We will not accept talks for the sake of talks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last two years, we have witnessed extraordinary changes in the Arab World. Ordinary citizens sparked the movement for change. Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia. Young people on Cairo's Tahrir Square and in the streets of Benghazi. And peaceful protesters in Syria, who were brutally shot by the Assad Regime.

Two years on, there are many sceptics when it comes to transformation in the Arab World. Many fear that the new governments will not follow the path towards democracy and respect of universal values.

At times, it seems that political and sectarian differences could outweigh the quest for democracy and economic reforms.

And yet, young people in the Arab World are now more optimistic about their future than two years ago.

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The path is different for each and every country. We cannot force upon the Arab countries our understanding of how societies should function.

But we can make a difference. Germany has concluded Transformation Partnerships with Tunisia and Egypt.

We have committed ourselves to advance democracy and the rule of law. Our message to people in the Arab World is straight-forward. If you embark on the process of democratic and economic reforms you can count on our support.

So far, we have only witnessed the first few minutes of an historic hour. Change will take time. We need strategic patience. This is an historic opportunity to advance freedom, democracy and universal human rights throughout the region.

This is the historic opportunity for Israel to live among democracies. The historic opportunity to make peace among free peoples.

In my view, the response for Israel to this change should be a renewed commitment for peace. Let me quote President Obama in his speech to the People of Israel on March 21st:

“Peace is the only path to true security.”

Nothing can guarantee Israel’s long-term security better than peace with its neighbours and peace with the Palestinians.

We strongly support renewed efforts towards a Two-State-Solution.

I know that a renewed commitment for peace requires courage and entails hard choices for both sides. But time is running out.

The longer the conflict takes, the harder it will become to reach a solution.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Let me conclude by thanking the World Jewish Congress:

For re-establishing ties between World Jewry and Post-War Germany.

For reaching out to my country over the abyss of the past. For relentlessly fighting to preserve the legacy of the Holocaust. And for being a constant reminder to all of us – everywhere in the world – to remain vigilant.

Europe is based on our common values. It is more than a single market. It is more than a common currency. Europe is a community of values.

Every time our values are being challenged we will raise our voice. We will speak out clearly.

We are tolerant citizens. Tolerance is wise; tolerance in the face of intolerance is historic foolishness. At this meeting here in Budapest we stand together: For our values, for tolerance and against Anti-Semitism.

Thank you.